

Amendment to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) ~~In a~~ A substrate processing apparatus that continuously processes a plurality of substrates, the substrate processing apparatus comprising:

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized by being equipped with~~

a conveyor chamber constituting a substrate convey ~~space,~~space;

a plurality of process chambers that carry out substrate ~~processing,~~processing;

a substrate convey apparatus provided in said conveyor chamber having a function of conveying ~~substrates,~~substrates; and

a control section that controls convey processing of substrates by the substrate convey apparatus so that, in a case in which after a substrate is continuously processed by two or more process chambers, the substrate is re-conveyed from the last process chamber to any of the two or more process chambers other than the last and return processing implemented, in the re-conveyance the substrate is conveyed to said any of the process chambers after being temporarily retracted to a place other than a process chamber,

wherein, in a case in which the substrate process time in each of said two or more process chambers is equal, taking n as the number of process chambers subject to return processing and T as substrate convey time between processing chambers, the retraction time used by the control section is $\{(n-1) \cdot T\}$.

2. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in claim 1,

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that~~

wherein processing at each process chamber in the return processing is the same processing as processing carried out a preceding time in each of the process chambers.

3. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in claim 1,

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that~~

wherein processing at each process chamber in the return processing is processing under different conditions from processing carried out a preceding time in each of the process chambers.

4. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in claim 1,

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized~~wherein, with respect to a single substrate, by carrying out a number of processings that is the same as, or greater than, the number of process chambers connected to the conveyor chamber.

5. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in claim 4,

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that it forms~~wherein, on the single substrate are formed a number of laminated films that is the same as, or greater than, the number of said process chambers.

6. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in claim 1,

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that~~wherein the control section controls convey processing of substrates by the substrate convey apparatus so that a second substrate is

conveyed to a first process chamber after processing of a first substrate at the first process chamber and conveyance of the first substrate to a next process chamber has been completed.

7. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in claim 1,

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that~~ wherein the place other than a process chamber to which the substrate is retracted is in a preliminary chamber connected to the conveyor chamber.

8. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in claim 1,

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that~~ wherein the place other than a process chamber to which the substrate is retracted is in a load-lock chamber connected to the conveyor chamber.

9-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in ~~claim 9~~ claim 1,

~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that~~ wherein substrate process time in the process chambers is defined as the time from the closing of a gate valve separating the process chambers and the conveyor chamber to the opening of the gate valve after processing of the substrate has been carried out.

12. (Currently Amended) In the substrate processing apparatus as described in ~~claim 9~~ claim 1,
~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that~~ wherein the convey time is defined as
the time from the opening of a gate valve separating the transfer origin process chamber and the
conveyor chamber to the convey of the substrate subject to convey to the transfer destination process
chamber after it has been held by the substrate convey apparatus, and the closing of the transfer
destination gate valve.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~In a substrate processing apparatus comprising:
a conveyor chamber;
in which a plurality of process chambers connected to ~~the~~ a conveyor chamber, the process
chambers being ~~are~~ accommodated in a single substrate convey apparatus such that ~~and~~ continuous
substrate processing ~~is~~ can be carried out in two or more process chambers P1, P2, ..., Pj (j here
being a natural number of two or more) of said plurality of process ~~chambers,~~ chambers; and
~~a substrate processing apparatus characterized in that it is equipped with~~ a control section that
controls substrate convey processing by the substrate convey apparatus so that in a case in which
return processing is implemented in which, from the final process chamber Pj to carry out the
continuous processing, the substrate is re-conveyed to any process chamber Px ($1 \leq x < j$) of the
continuous-processing process chambers and continuous processing carried out in the order Px, ...,
Py ($x \leq y \leq j$), when a substrate is returned from the final process chamber Pj to a process chamber
Px, the substrate is conveyed to the process chamber Px after being temporarily retracted to a place
other than a process chamber,

wherein, in a case in which the substrate process time in each of said two or more process chambers is equal, taking n as the number of process chambers subject to return processing and T as substrate convey time between processing chambers, the retraction time used by the control section is $\{(n-1) \cdot T\}$.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~In a~~ A semiconductor device manufacturing method of manufacturing semiconductor devices by continuous processing of a plurality of substrates, the method comprising:

continuously processing a substrate by two or more of the process chambers;

~~a semiconductor device manufacturing method characterized in that, in a case in which after a~~
after the substrate is continuously processed by the two or more process chambers, re-
conveying the substrate is re-conveyed from the last process chamber to any of the two or more
process chambers other than the last process chamber and implementing return processing; and
implemented;

temporarily retracting the substrate to a location, other than one of the process chambers,
during the in the re-conveyance to one of the process chambers, the substrate is conveyed to said any
of the process chambers after being temporarily retracted to a place other than a process chamber;

wherein, in a case in which the substrate process time in each of said two or more process chambers is equal, taking n as number of process chambers subject to return processing and T as substrate convey time between processing chambers, the retraction time used by the control section is $\{(n-1) \cdot T\}$.

15-16. (Cancelled)